

Council conclusions on entrepreneurship in education and training

EDUCATION, YOUTH, Culture and Sport Council meeting
Brussels, 12 December 2014

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THIS ISSUE, AS SET OUT IN THE ANNEX TO THESE CONCLUSIONS, AND IN PARTICULAR THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL'S RECENT CALL "TO PROMOTE A CLIMATE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOB CREATION",¹

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE DEFINITION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP USED IN THE 2006 RECOMMENDATION ON KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING²,

STRESSES THAT

1. Both entrepreneurship and education are priorities of the *Europe 2020* strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
2. Developing an entrepreneurial mindset can have considerable benefits for citizens in both their professional and private lives.
3. Entrepreneurship in education and training can foster employability, self-employment and active citizenship, as well as outward-looking, adaptable education and training institutions.
4. Entrepreneurship in education and training should aim to provide all learners, regardless of gender, socio-economic background or special needs, with the skills and competences needed to build an entrepreneurial mindset and capacity.
5. Entrepreneurship in education and training can also provide learners with the skills, competences and support needed for new venture creation, for instance in the form of SMEs and social enterprises.

1 See doc. EUCO 79/14, page 15, final paragraph.

2 For the purposes of this text, the term 'entrepreneurship' is used within the meaning of 'a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' as defined in the 2006 Recommendation, and refers to *"an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance."*

6. In addition to basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, entrepreneurship requires the gradual development of a range of competences, starting from an early age. These include, for instance, creativity and a sense of initiative; problem solving and critical thinking; decision-making and risk taking; adaptability and perseverance; self-discipline and a sense of responsibility; leadership and teamwork; planning and organisational ability; understanding of the social, economic and cultural context; and language skills and the ability to persuade.
7. Entrepreneurship skills and competences should be addressed at all levels of education and training and, as far as possible, across the curriculum in a manner that enables their continuous development, with attention being paid to the attainment of entrepreneurial learning outcomes.
8. Education and training institutions should themselves endeavour to be more creative and innovative, in response to a rapidly changing environment driven by technology, globalisation and evolving skills needs. Teachers, trainers and educational leaders should be encouraged to foster entrepreneurial skills, competences and mindsets, while institutions should offer creative and innovative learning environments and actively encourage engagement with the wider community.
9. Partnerships between education and training institutions and businesses, particularly SMEs, can help foster closer cooperation between the world of education and training and the world of work. Businesses and business organisations should therefore be encouraged to support entrepreneurship in education and training, for instance through the provision of physical or virtual platforms designed to promote such partnerships and work-based learning.
10. Knowledge triangle integration between education, research and innovation - such as that supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) - enhances the teaching and learning process, stimulating creative thinking and innovative attitudes and approaches that often result in new venture creation.
11. Education and training activities at master's and doctoral levels, such as those carried out by the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities, also help to promote the development of innovation-related skills, the improvement of managerial and entrepreneurial skills and competences and the mobility of researchers and students.
12. Non-formal and informal learning, as well as voluntary activities, can also make an important contribution to the development of entrepreneurial skills, competences and mindsets.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL PRACTICE AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR SUBSIDIARITY AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY, TO:

1. Encourage the development of a coordinated approach to entrepreneurship education throughout the education and training system, including for instance by connecting ministries of education and other relevant ministries, by facilitating the involvement of businesses and entrepreneurs - as well as the non-profit sector - in all levels of planning and implementation (including partnerships between education and training institutions and business), and by encouraging specific evaluation and monitoring.
2. Promote the inclusion of entrepreneurial skills and competences in both initial teacher/trainer education programmes and continuous professional development.
3. Encourage synergies between entrepreneurship education and training and career guidance to support the acquisition of the entrepreneurship key competence and to reflect venture creation as a career opportunity.
4. Promote and support student venture initiatives, for example by encouraging the creation of appropriate learning environments, the provision of sound careers guidance at all levels of education and training and - particularly in the fields of higher education and VET - the availability of mentoring and incubators for aspiring entrepreneurs.
5. Facilitate and stimulate the involvement of entrepreneurs in the learning process, as well as draw on past graduates' experience, for example by inviting entrepreneurs into education and training institutions to discuss their experiences with students, teachers and trainers or by providing opportunities for work-based learning, traineeships and apprenticeships.

6. Make use, where possible, of graduate tracking information when assessing the quality and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education and training.
7. Promote practical entrepreneurial experiences, such as creativity challenges, start-ups, business simulations or entrepreneurial project-based learning, bearing in mind the need to use an age-relevant approach.
8. Note the work done by the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education.

With specific regard to higher education, bearing in mind institutional autonomy:

9. Support higher education institutions (HEIs) in their efforts to develop targeted measures for managing institutional change and further organisational development, particularly with regard to promoting a more entrepreneurial and innovative mindset.
10. Promote use of the *HEInnovate* online tool³ as a means to support HEIs in devising effective strategies for developing more entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities, by improving awareness of the issues and challenges raised and providing guidance on how to address these.
11. Bearing in mind the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training⁴, which emphasise that striving for excellent research is fundamental, highlight the role of early stage researchers as agents of knowledge transfer towards the non-academic world, in particular and where appropriate, by stimulating the exposure of PhD candidates to industry and other relevant employment sectors, as well as the acquisition of different transferable skills, including entrepreneurship, through adequate training or practical experience.

With specific regard to schools, VET and adult learning, bearing in mind institutional autonomy:

12. Encourage the availability of services that assist schools and VET and adult learning institutions and providers in finding partners from the world of business and social entrepreneurs.
13. Encourage efforts by VET institutions to support student venture creation through the exchange of good practice and the intensification of links with business and social enterprise.
14. Promote the availability of, and access to, apprenticeship programmes and other work-based learning initiatives which have an entrepreneurial dimension.
15. Encourage adult learning providers, where possible, to integrate entrepreneurship skills and competences into existing provision or by means of specific courses.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, ACTING WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES, TO

1. Explore - in close collaboration with the 'ET2020' Working Group on Transversal Skills - the feasibility and usefulness of developing a guiding reference framework for the entrepreneurship key competence⁵, demonstrating the different elements of the competence and using an approach based on learning outcomes and levels. This would support a coordinated approach between the different levels of education and training, as well as help to take into account non-formal and informal learning outcomes.
2. Facilitate the exchange of ideas and good practices at national and European level - for example via the 'ET2020' Working Group on Transversal Skills - with a view to enhancing entrepreneurship in education and training.

³ <https://heinnovate.eu/intranet/main>

⁴ As endorsed in the November 2011 Council conclusions on the modernisation of higher education (OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 39, paragraph 10).

⁵ Within the context of the Key Competences Framework, as set out in the 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006).

3. Explore the added value of developing a citizen tool at European level for the self-assessment of the entrepreneurship competence, including identifying any similar tools which are currently available.
4. Fully exploit the potential that *Erasmus+* offers in supporting entrepreneurship education, for example by encouraging the mainstreaming of education-business cooperation in Knowledge Alliances for higher education and in Sectoral Skills Alliances for VET. In particular, take into account the results of the European policy experimentations initiative concerning practical entrepreneurial experiences.
5. Promote teacher/trainer education in entrepreneurial skills and competences, for example through projects which bring together networks of teachers and trainers and which encourage input from actual entrepreneurs, or through the development of new courses or resources, including through digital and online learning.
6. In the context of the Youth Guarantee Scheme, explore ways to guide young people towards entrepreneurial activities through relevant training, improving cooperation between education and training institutions and the world of work in order to identify young people who can benefit from the Scheme, promoting entrepreneurial learning for participants in the Scheme and identifying business start-ups as a potential career pathway.
7. Consider how best to use other European resources such as the European Social Fund to support the promotion of entrepreneurship in education and training.
8. Support cooperation between entrepreneurs and education and training institutions with a view to developing innovative educational solutions, for example through competitions and incubators.
9. Support cooperation and exchanges with networks and organisations at regional, national and European level, which can offer experience and expertise in enhancing entrepreneurship in education and training and in developing tools and methodologies designed to promote entrepreneurship as a key competence.
10. Taking into consideration the work done by the Expert Group on Data and Indicators of Entrepreneurial Learning and Competence, and with the appropriate involvement of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, further explore the usefulness and possibility of defining indicators on entrepreneurship education in order to broaden the evidence base and help to identify areas of best practice.
11. Explore the potential of developing free and open digital and online tools that strengthen the acquisition of entrepreneurial and innovative skills and competences, and explore cooperation with the open source community to promote free business tools, as well as training, for such tools.

With specific regard to higher education, bearing in mind institutional autonomy:

12. Promote synergies with the research and innovation sector, with a view to encouraging initiatives aimed at developing and broadening entrepreneurial skills and competences.
13. Support the further development, adaptation and dissemination of *HEInnovate* as a tool for entrepreneurial and innovative HEIs, by taking into account evidence collected through its application in those HEIs which choose to participate, by using the findings of OECD national reviews and by facilitating regular exchanges with Member States and HEI stakeholders.
14. Invite the EIT to explore the potential of the EIT '*certified innovator and entrepreneur*' label currently being developed and link this to its overall education agenda, disseminating the results widely in accordance with the EIT outreach agenda, whilst avoiding any additional administrative burden.
15. Exploit, where appropriate, the entrepreneurial potential of higher education, by identifying enabling factors in curricular, extracurricular and institutional terms, by promoting these more widely across HEIs and at other levels of education and by making use of relevant studies on supporting such potential.

16. Take into consideration the role and impact of the University-Business Forum, in particular the recommendation of its Entrepreneurship pillar, with a view to developing innovative approaches and fostering exchanges on entrepreneurship-related topics at the intersection of universities and business.

With specific regard to schools, VET and adult learning, bearing in mind institutional autonomy:

17. Explore the potential of *Entrepreneurship360* as a tool to support schools and VET institutions in identifying and acting upon their entrepreneurial strengths and weaknesses.
18. Support teacher/trainer networking and project development in entrepreneurship education, for instance through the eTwinning and EPALE platforms.
19. Explore the potential of the European Business Forum on Vocational Training, in particular by taking account of its outcomes and recommendations regarding entrepreneurship, as appropriate.
20. Within the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, encourage initiatives to develop and broaden entrepreneurial skills and competences in the context of apprenticeship and other work-based learning programmes.

TAKES NOTE OF THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO

1. Enrich the evidence base on entrepreneurship education through relevant studies, such as the Eurydice thematic report planned for 2015.
2. Report on the outreach and impact of the *HEInnovate* tool and its methodology by the first half of 2016, and make any relevant recommendations for its further development.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

ensure the necessary internal coordination so that all areas of education and training are involved in the follow-up to these conclusions.

Political background

1. The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning⁶;
2. The Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET2020")⁷;
3. The conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 26 November 2009 on developing the role of education in a fully functioning knowledge triangle⁸;
4. The Council conclusions of 16 March 2010 on *Europe 2020*⁹;
5. The Council conclusions of 28 November 2011 on the modernisation of higher education¹⁰;
6. The Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹¹;
7. The Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people¹²;
8. The Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on effective teacher education¹³;
9. The European Council conclusions of 26-27 June 2014, in particular Annex I: *A Strategic Agenda for the Union in times of change*¹⁴;

and

1. The communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*¹⁵, November 2012;
2. The communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on *the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan - Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe*¹⁶, January 2013."

⁶ OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp. 10-18.

⁷ OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, pp. 2-10.

⁸ OJ C 302, 12.12.2009, pp. 3-5.

⁹ 7586/10

¹⁰ OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 36-41.

¹¹ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, pp. 1-5.

¹² OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, pp. 18-21.

¹³ OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, pp. 22-25.

¹⁴ EUCO 79/14, p. 15.

¹⁵ 14871/12 + ADD 1 to 8.

¹⁶ COM(2012) 795 final